



## A Healthier, Cooperative, Respectful Approach to Divorce: Collaborative Divorce

"I believe it is important to try to respectfully end a marriage or relationship without letting the legal system destroy the family emotionally or financially. *Your goal is a good life when this process is done; my job is to help you meet that goal.*" Margaret

### What is collaborative divorce?

**Margaret A. Zuleger, Attorney:** Both partners obtain collaborative attorneys, and everyone meets regularly for a series of settlement meetings. Both clients and lawyers work everything out in writing before anything is filed in court. In addition to the four-person team, some also choose to include a financial neutral to gather information about finances and budgeting, as well as a mental health professional, who can serve as a child specialist or a coach to improve communication between parties and ensure everyone stays focused on the future, post-divorce life.

### What are the benefits of collaborative divorce over other options?

**Margaret:** Since the goal is to make agreements that meet the financial and emotional needs of both partners and the children, it helps to preserve whatever positive aspects of the relationship you have. In the future, you can move past the divorce and successfully co-parent your children. Collaborative divorce is meant to be amicable, peaceful, respectful and forward-thinking. In addition, since collaborative divorce is handled outside of court until the very end, personal information about finances and other issues are kept out of public record.

### How does the cost of collaborative divorce compare with the cost of traditional litigation?

**Margaret:** Collaborative divorce is usually less expensive because it's often much quicker and more efficient. We often meet frequently and move the process along more quickly than litigation cases. Or, we can slow down the pace without increasing the cost, unlike litigation where delay increases the cost. In addition, you're paying your attorney to really work out your agreement, as opposed to paying for them to appear in court numerous times to discuss the status of the divorce, which doesn't usually advance the case much.

### How is collaborative law different from settlement negotiations between divorce attorneys?

**Margaret:** In collaborative law, all negotiations are done with all parties present, and everything is discussed in the meetings. There are no lawyer letters or, what I like to refer to as, the game of telephone, where messages get misconstrued. It's a much more satisfying process, and often it's easier for the partners to stick to their agreements because they had a voice and participation in the outcome.

### How can I get my spouse to participate in collaborative divorce?

**Margaret:** A lot of people have not heard of collaborative divorce, and when they hear about it from their spouse asking for a divorce, they often mistakenly assume the process is "good for you and bad for me." I encourage people to visit the website of the Collaborative Law Institute of Illinois ([collablawil.org](http://collablawil.org)), so they can educate themselves on the benefits of this process.

**For more information, visit [ZulegerLaw.com](http://ZulegerLaw.com) or call (847) 920-7732 for a Free Initial Consultation.**

**Client Testimonials...** "I feel fortunate to have found Margaret during a very difficult time in my life. I was married for many years, with four children, and neither my ex husband or I had any interest in a contentious divorce. As a woman who had been through a similar experience, Margaret was compassionate and respectful of our situation, while also giving me sage advice about how to manage important elements of the marital settlement agreement to protect my interests. Margaret was responsive, reliable and knowledgeable and I would recommend her highly to women and couples who are seeking collaborative divorces."  
—Sylvia S., Arlington Heights

"I've been a marriage and family therapist for over 25 years, and unfortunately, despite our best efforts, I occasionally am asked to offer people the name of a competent divorce attorney. This is a much more difficult task than you can imagine, having heard more than my share of horror stories regarding unnecessarily lengthy court proceedings, unmanaged couple conflicts, and attorneys who seem to have only their best interests at heart. So I feel fortunate indeed to have discovered Margaret Zuleger's practice in Arlington Heights. Over the past several years, I can now confidently refer clients who I know will be listened to, treated fairly and respectfully, and will be assisted through the unpleasant process of divorce in a sensitive and efficient way. In the often confusing and overwhelming world of seeking a good divorce attorney, Margaret Zuleger has proven to be a great resource for me and my clients."  
— Larry Frank, Cary, IL

**ZULEGER LAW**  
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